

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills**

**Follow-Through Inspection
Teagasc Agricultural & Horticultural Colleges**

REPORT

College name	Salesian Agricultural College
College address	Pallaskenry, County Limerick

Date of Evaluation: 19 November 2019



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills**

FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTION

Follow-through inspections evaluate the progress a college has made in implementing main recommendations made in an earlier Whole College Evaluation (WCE) rather than the overall educational provision that the college makes. Inspectors also advise the college on strategies and actions to enable them to fully address recommendations.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated the progress the college has made in implementing recommendations made in an earlier inspection under the following headings:

1. Progress achieved to date
2. Summary of findings
3. Recommendations

Inspectors describe the quality of the progress made in each of these areas using the Inspectorate's follow-through quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The follow-through quality continuum explains the terms used by inspectors when evaluating the college's progress in implementing recommendations.

The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

Follow-through inspection activities	
<p>The following activities took place in the course of the follow-through inspection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with principal and senior management team • Interview with members of in-college management team and course co-ordinators • Review of college documentation • Review of college facilities • Observation of teaching, learning and training • Interaction with learners 	
Recommendation in original inspection report	Progress achieved to date on implementation of recommendation
<p>The board should, in a consultative manner, develop a robust and inclusive strategic plan that will map the college's improvement over the short, medium and long term.</p>	<p>Very good progress</p> <p>A strategic plan has been developed in a collaborative and consultative manner with all stakeholders. Priorities have been identified in four key areas and required actions and timeframes have been outlined.</p>
<p>Improved communication systems and protocols should be developed to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to play an active role in the college's ongoing development.</p>	<p>Very good progress</p> <p>Systematic improvements in communications have been embedded at college level. These improvements include: the consultative strategic planning process outlined above; the scheduling of regular meetings; the use of email to ensure timely messaging; and the streamlining of timetabling to minimise uncertainty. College management is also at an advanced stage in the development of a college electronic application that will further enhance communication among learners and staff alike.</p>

<p>Learners' experiences in theory lessons should be improved through greater use of active and engaging teaching methodologies.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Partial progress</p> <p>College management has taken some steps to improve learners' experiences in theory lessons. Relevant training in fundamental teaching strategies has been facilitated. There is still considerable scope for improvement in this area as learners' experiences were primarily passive in the theory lessons observed. College management has initiated initial discussions with a local provider of initial teacher education with a view to designing a bespoke course for college</p>
	<p>teaching staff. This initiative should be pursued with vigour.</p>
<p>The quality of learner facilities should be addressed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Very good progress</p> <p>There has been considerable development in the college's facilities in the intervening period between the WCE and the follow through Inspection. Student leisure and recreation facilities have been transformed. Classrooms have been modernised to include high quality information and communication technologies. Canteen and toilet facilities have also been redeveloped to a high standard. Further developments should be identified in conjunction with the newly formed student council body.</p>
<p>A more structured and systematic approach to the scheduling and planning of taught farm practical sessions should be introduced.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Very good progress</p> <p>The college's assistant principal has developed an effective system to plan and schedule the use of farm resources for the purposes of training and instruction. Staff and learners receive appropriate notice when amendments to scheduled activities are necessary. Seasonal and time-sensitive farm activities are integrated effectively into the scheduling of taught farm practical sessions. This approach enhances learners' experiences and promotes greater collaboration among farm staff and teaching staff.</p>
<p>A more cohesive approach should be taken to improve learner support and care structures in the college.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Partial progress</p> <p>The college has taken a number of steps to support learners with additional educational needs. These supports include: the early identification of learners in need of support; the provision of a mentor for all students; and reducing the maximum number of examinations to one per day. Further improvements are required in the area of supporting learners on an ongoing basis during, and where appropriate, in addition to their timetabled lessons. The recommended development of college teaching staff's teaching expertise should be beneficial in this regard.</p>

Summary of findings

Overall, there has been significant progress in a number of the key areas for development outlined in the 2016 WCE report. The development of a consultative and collaborative strategic plan focusing on four key areas highlights the college's commitment to achieving its vision and its commitment to ensuring accountability in terms of progress. The improvements achieved in relation to college communications have resulted in a more transparent and consultative approach to ongoing and developmental issues, facilitating greater engagement among staff and ensuring improved ownership in college development. The considerable improvement in the college's facilities has resulted in a more appropriate learner experience overall and future areas for improvement should be explored in conjunction with the college's student council. Good systems have also been employed to ensure greater clarity in the area of timetabling and scheduling of farm-based activities, thereby maximising the potential of the farm as a teaching, learning and training resource. However, it is clear that the college still has considerable scope for development in the areas of improving learners' experiences in theory lessons and in their ongoing support for learners.

Recommendations (if applicable)

- The college should progress its plans to support its teaching staff in their continuing professional development in the area of pedagogy.
- Systems and strategies to support learners with additional educational needs should be embedded in the ongoing teaching, learning and training experiences of learners.

THE QUALITY CONTINUUM FOR FOLLOW-THROUGH INSPECTIONS
<i>Very good progress</i> indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and that the action has fully achieved or will achieve the required outcome.
<i>Good progress</i> indicates that appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and that substantial improvement has occurred, although further progress is necessary.
<i>Partial progress</i> indicates that some appropriate action has been taken to address the recommendation, and some improvement has occurred, but considerable further progress is necessary.
<i>No progress</i> indicates that no action has been taken, and that the original recommendation remains to be addressed.